

White Flint plan delayed

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The long-awaited White Flint sector plan may have to wait a little longer still, as Montgomery County council members and potential developers can't agree how to split the possible \$1 billion in public amenities costs related to the project. The county Planning Board met last week to discuss different financing plans in hopes that one may be approved by January, but with no consensus on the horizon, that date could be pushed back.

"We need to reach an agreement among all the players that would have the county step up more than it has to date," Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) said. The councilman, who represents the White Flint area, promoted the idea of the county footing more of the bill than is currently proposed at that meeting to get the project off the ground. "I believe the current plan is lacking in that commitment. At the moment, it doesn't feel like it's a fair split," he said.

The development plan, which is expected to take up to 30 to 40 years to implement, will add around 9,800 residents to the White Flint area, along with 2,600 affordable housing units. The development will cover about 480 acres of land surrounding the White Flint Metro Station and will be focused on creating more mass public transit and allowing residents and workers to leave their vehicles at home. Many older commercial buildings will be replaced over time with larger mixed-use facilities, some of them 30 stories tall.

County Executive Isiah "Ike" Leggett (D) released a funding proposal for the county that included launching a new tax for property owners within a mile of the White Flint Metro Station and a tax on transportation impact on the area. Financial analysts from Leggett's office have estimated the county could reap \$208 million in tax revenues and impact fees from the city over the next 40 years if Leggett's proposal was adopted.

If Leggett's proposal is approved, beginning next fiscal year, property owners within the special tax district would pay an extra 10 cents per \$100 of assessed value to the county.